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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
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EXAMINER

JANVIER, JEAN D

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

3622

DATE MAILED: 08/04/2003

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/684,737

Applicant(s)

LOPEZ ET AL.

Examiner

Jean D Janvier

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133).
- Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 04 March 2002.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-50 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-16 and 20-35 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☒ Claim(s) 1-550 are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
- Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
- 11) ☐ The proposed drawing correction filed on _____ is: a) ☐ approved b) ☐ disapproved by the Examiner.
- If approved, corrected drawings are required in reply to this Office action.
- 12) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 119 and 120

- 13) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).
- * See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.
- 14) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) (to a provisional application).
- a) ☐ The translation of the foreign language provisional application has been received.
- 15) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for domestic priority under 35 U.S.C. §§ 120 and/or 121.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449) Paper No(s) 446
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413) Paper No(s) _____
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☒ Other:

DETAILED ACTION

Specification

Information Disclosure Statement

The IDS filed, under 1.56, with the Instant Application was considered by the Examiner
(See enclosed Forms 1449).

Claim Objections

Claim 5 is objected to because of the following informalities:

Regarding claim 5, lines 6-7, "...between said point of sale said handheld device" should
apparently be -- ...between said point of sale **and** said handheld device--.

Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112

The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and
distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

Claim 34 recites the limitation "said transmission module" in line 1. There is insufficient
antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim. For examination purpose, the Examiner assumes
that the Applicant meant to refer to -- said transfer module--.

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Status of the claims

After a restriction requirement, Applicant had elected, over the phone and without traverse, to have claims 1-16 and 20-35 prosecuted on the merits. Hence, claims 1-16 and 20-35 will be examined accordingly.

Duplicate Claims

Claim 13 is objected to under 37 CFR 1.75 as being a substantial duplicate of claims 14 because the two claims are virtually identical except that claim 13 recites "a wireless network" and claim 14 recites a "wireless communications" and these two phrases are used interchangeably in the art. When two claims in an application are duplicates or else are so close in content that they both cover the same thing, despite a slight difference in wording, it is proper after allowing one claim to object to the other as being a substantial duplicate of the allowed claim. See MPEP § 706.03(k).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

(e) the invention was described in (1) an application for patent, published under section 122(b), by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent or (2) a patent granted on an application for patent by another filed in the United States before the invention by the applicant for patent, except that an international application filed under the treaty defined in section 351(a) shall have the effects for purposes of this subsection of an application filed in the United States only if the international application designated the United States and was published under Article 21(2) of such treaty in the English language.

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Claims 1-5, 8-11, 13-14 and 20-35 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by Guthrie et al. (hereinafter Guthrie), US Patent 6,467,686 B1.

As per claim 1, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any other computer network having a server containing a central repository or database storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle. The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data with the user's personal information. Once the user has uploaded the coupon scanner or handheld device with the desired coupon data, the user can take the coupon scanner to a retail store where he can redeem the electronic coupons at the retail store checkout through a POS cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7) located at the checkout used to upload or transfer the coupon data from the coupon scanner to the retail store system during a redemption process (synchronization of POS and handheld device) (Col. 4: 64 to col. 5: 24).

As per claims 2 and 4, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any other computer network having a server containing a central repository or database storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7). The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data

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with the user's personal information. Once the user has uploaded the coupon scanner or handheld device with the desired coupon data, the user can take the coupon scanner to a retail store where he can redeem at least one electronic coupon at the retail store checkout having a POS cradle located at the checkout used to connect the coupon scanner in order upload or transfer the at least one electronic coupon data from the coupon scanner to the retail store system (synchronization of POS and handheld device) (Col. 4: 64 to col. 5: 24; col. 7: 48 to col. 8: 24; col. 8: 66 to col. 9: 34).

As per claims 3 and 5, Guthrie teaches a system wherein after redeeming at least one electronic coupon stored within the memory or database of the coupon scanner, subsequent to uploading during a redemption process or synchronization process the at least one electronic coupon data from the coupon scanner to the retail store POS system (pricing system) and successfully comparing and matching transmitted coupon data with scannable pricing information, coupon information related to the redeemed electronic coupon is deleted from the memory or database of the coupon scanner where the coupon information was stored to thereby prevent fraud (reconciling data representative of the at least one electronic coupon or negotiable economic credit stored within the memory or database of the coupon scanner or handheld device) (col. 8: 66 to col. 9: 34).

As per claims 8-11, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any computer network having a server containing a central repository or database storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the

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electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7). The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data with the user's personal information. Once the user has uploaded the coupon scanner or handheld device with the desired coupon data, the user can take the coupon scanner to a retail store where he can redeem at least one electronic coupon at the retail store checkout having a POS cradle (docking station) located at the checkout used to connect the coupon scanner in order to upload or transfer the at least one electronic coupon data from the coupon scanner or handheld device to the retail store system (synchronization of POS and handheld device). And when a product UPC code, stored in a database or product database related to the retail store POS system and read by the retail store POS scanner during a transaction or redemption process, matches a product UPC code in the customer's or user's order, which is directly associated with the at least one electronic coupon transferred from the user's coupon scanner or handheld device to the retail store POS system and when the uploaded or transferred electronic coupon information and the validation code respectively compared to the scannable pricing information stored in the POS pricing database (coupon database) and the stored validation code to a corresponding validation code provided by a manufacturer match the scannable pricing information and the provided validation code respectively, the at least one electronic coupon is redeemed accordingly and a price reduction is applied to the customer's order (It is further understood here that coupon data are stored in a database or pricing database or coupon database coupled to the POS system and wherein the stored data are retrieved during redemption and used for validation and comparison purposes as inherently practiced in the art)

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(Col. 7: 48 to col. 9: 34) and (Col. 4: 64 to col. 5: 24; col. 7: 48 to col. 8: 24; col. 8: 66 to col. 9: 34; col. 12: 56-62; fig. 9; see also claim 1 of the prior art).

As per claims 13-14, 25-26 and 32-35, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons (new coupon data) or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any computer network having a server containing a central repository or database (coupon source) storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle during an interaction or synchronization between the central repository and the coupon scanner. The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data with the user's personal information. Once the user has uploaded the coupon scanner or handheld device with the desired coupon data, the user can take the coupon scanner to a retail store where he can redeem the electronic coupons at the retail store checkout through a POS cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7, infrared device interface or wireless device interface) located at the checkout used to upload or transfer the coupon data from the coupon scanner to the retail store system (synchronization of POS and handheld device) and wherein the cradle is an infrared transceiver device interface or wireless device interface. In other words, a wireless connection (wireless communication network) is used during the synchronization process between the coupon scanner or the handheld device and the retail store POS system to transfer coupon data related to at least one electronic coupon or negotiable economic credit from the coupon scanner to the retail store POS system (Col. 4: 64 to col. 5: 24; See claims 1, 8 and 22 of the current reference).

As per claim 31, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any computer network having a server containing a central repository or database storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7). The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data with the user's personal information. The coupon scanner further contains routines or a coupon management program (coupon management module) within its memory or database for managing the storage and usage of the electronic coupon data within the memory of the coupon scanner or handheld device (col. 5: 25-36; col. 8: 15-65; col. 9: 33-34).

Claims 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 and 30 contain limitations already addressed in claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11 respectively and therefore, these limitations of claims 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 27, 28, 29 and 30 are rejected under a similar rationale as respectively applied to claims 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, 10 and 11.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary

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skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

This application currently names joint inventors. In considering patentability of the claims under 35 U.S.C. 103(a), the examiner presumes that the subject matter of the various claims was commonly owned at the time any inventions covered therein were made absent any evidence to the contrary. Applicant is advised of the obligation under 37 CFR 1.56 to point out the inventor and invention dates of each claim that was not commonly owned at the time a later invention was made in order for the examiner to consider the applicability of 35 U.S.C. 103(c) and potential 35 U.S.C. 102(e), (f) or (g) prior art under 35 U.S.C. 103(a).

Claims 6-7, 15-16 and 12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Guthrie in view of Biorge et al. (hereinafter Biorge), US Patent 5, 806, 045A.

As per claims 6-7 and 15-16, Guthrie does not expressly disclose a method and/or system for providing one new negotiable economic credit or a new coupon during a wireless connection (redemption process or synchronization or data verification or validation) between the user's coupon scanner or handheld device and the retail store POS system, wherein the data or new coupon data related to the one new negotiable economic credit are transmitted wirelessly from a coupon source related to the retail store POS and stored within the memory of the user's coupon scanner.

However, Biorge teaches a system for providing incentive credits to a user or customer via a handheld or portable device 74 for every qualifying transaction conducted at a participating retailer or provider having a provider device 76 wherein the value of the incentive credits is

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contingent upon the value of a current transaction and wherein the customer's incentive credits are stored on the memory of the portable or handheld device 74 where they can be retrieved during a redemption process. At any given time subsequent to storing the incentive credits on the customer's handheld device, the customer can take the said device 74 to the same retailer or another participating retailer or provider to redeem at least a portion of the incentive credits during a second transaction or a redemption process wherein the stored incentive credits are transmitted from the customer's handheld device 74 to the retailer's or provider's POS system or base device 72 (during a synchronization process). At the conclusion of the redemption process, the redeemed incentive credits are subtracted from the stored incentive credits and the portable device 74 memory is updating accordingly (reconciliation process). Finally, during the redemption process or second transaction (synchronization process), the retailer's POS system or base device 72 transfers newly earned incentive credits to the customer's handheld device 74 based on the value of the second transaction (See abstract; col. 6: 49 to col. 7: 64; figs. 1-3).

Therefore, an ordinary skilled artisan would have been motivated at the time of the invention to incorporate the teachings of Biorge into the incentive distribution system of Guthrie so as to provide a new negotiable economic credit or a new coupon or new incentive credits to a customer for conducting a business transaction at a participating retailer while redeeming an original negotiable economic credit or incentive credits or coupon stored in the customer's handheld device or coupon scanner, wherein the newly earned incentive credits are transmitted from the participating retailer's POS system to the customer's handheld device, using a docking station interface, an infrared transceiver interface, a wireless device interface, etc., where they are stored on permanent memory until they are retrieved and redeemed during a future

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transaction at a participating POS, thereby encouraging the customer to redeem his stored incentive credits more frequently and on a timely fashion by shopping at participating or associated retailers, who continue to incentivize the customer even during a redemption process, while increasing the redemption rate of the incentive credits or coupons and rendering the incentive distribution and redemption system more effective.

As per claim 12, Guthrie discloses a system for providing electronic coupons or negotiable economic credits to a user over the Internet or any computer network having a server containing a central repository or database storing the electronic coupon data, wherein the electronic coupon data are downloaded to the user's portable device or handheld device or coupon scanner connected to a cradle (docking station 22 of figs. 1, 6 and 7). The stored coupon data are marked with a unique personal identifier that will electronically stamp the coupon data with the user's personal information. The coupon scanner further contains routines or a coupon management program (coupon management module) within its memory or database for managing the storage and usage of the electronic coupon data within the memory of the coupon scanner or handheld device (col. 5: 25-36; col. 8: 15-65; col. 9: 33-34).

Conclusion

The following references, although not officially used, are considered to be highly relevant.

US Patent 6, 332, 127 to Bandera discloses a system for providing a coupon to a customer wherein the coupon is downloaded from a web server and uploaded on the customer's PDA device for permanent storage and wherein the PDA device is wireless connected to a store POS during a redemption process (figs 9A-9B; col. 9: 49 to col. 10: 31).

US Patent 5, 870, 030 to Deluca discloses a system for providing a coupon to a customer for answering quizzes related to advertisements displayed on the customer's pager and wherein the coupon data are downloaded from a remote system and uploaded on the customer's pager memory for permanent storage and wherein the pager having a bar code related to the stored coupon is scanned during a redemption process at a POS terminal (fig. 8; col. 10: 29 to col. 11: 2; col. 12: 26-45).

US Patent 6, 332, 128 to Nicholson discloses a system for providing a multi-level discount coupons to a customer wherein the discount coupons are encoded on a RF device, such as a transponder.

Any inquiry concerning this communication from the Examiner should be directed to Jean D. Janvier, whose telephone number is (703) 308-6287). The aforementioned can normally be reached Monday-Thursday from 10:00AM to 6:00 PM EST. If attempts to reach the Examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the Examiner's Supervisor, Mr. Eric W. Stamber, can be reached at (703) 305- 8469.

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For information on the status of your case, please call the help desk at (703) 308-1113. Further, the following fax numbers can be used, if need be, by the Applicant(s):

After Final- 703-872-9327

Before Final -703-872-9326


Non-Official Draft- 703-746-7240

Customer Service- 703-872-9325

Please provide support, that is page and line numbers, for any amended or new claim in an effort to help advance prosecution; otherwise any new claim language that is introduced in an amended or new claim may be considered as new matter, especially if the Application is a Jumbo Application.

JDJ

07/28/03


Jean D. Janvier

Patent Examiner
Art Unit 3622